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April 2, 2010

Development Review Division
Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, MD. 20910-3760
Attention: Erin Grayson, AICP, Senior Planner

RE: Preliminary Plan 120100170, 1000 Westmore Avenue

Dear Ms. Grayson:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Preliminary Plan for the proposed development at 1000 Westmore Avenue (Preliminary Plan 120100170). As provided in the materials submitted to the City, the project consists of a 15,000 square foot utility building requiring no upgrades to the City of Rockville water or sewer services. The property is outside of the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC) service district (WSSD), therefore the City of Rockville would provide water and sewer. However, the City's policy is to provide water and sewer only to properties within the corporate limits.

The City currently provides water and sewer service to the guard shack on-site, and has for many years. It appears that the overall development intent of the property has changed, and for this reason Rockville no longer supports the use of the existing water connection but will not disconnect service. However if upgrades to water and sewer services become necessary, or if fire suppression or fire hydrant coverage is insufficient for the property, we would request that the property be annexed into the City of Rockville to provide these upgrades. This is significant in that should an annexation petition be filed the County Council would be required to approve a residential land use and zoning of the property that differs from the County's existing industrial land use and zoning.

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The property is bordered to the south (across Ashley Avenue) by property incorporated into the City of Rockville, zoned and developed for detached single-family residential use. These abutting residential properties are located within the City's Lincoln Park Neighborhood and subject to the goals and policies of the 2007 Lincoln Park Neighborhood Plan. One of the primary objectives of this plan addresses the subject property specifically (referred to as the WINX site):

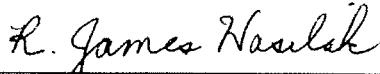
Eliminate industrial uses and zoning for redevelopment areas such as the Board of Education property on North Stonestreet Avenue, the WINX site on Ashley Avenue, and the industrial areas on Frederick Avenue and North Horners Lane.

Additional discussion of this site is contained in the neighborhood plan and provided as an attachment to this letter. In summary the neighborhood plan encourages the redevelopment of this property as residential, which should "seamlessly relate to the eclectic and vernacular nature of the existing homes in the Lincoln Park neighborhood". The plan recommends a mix of single-family detached, attached and semi-detached units on the property with a specific prohibition against retail and multi-family residential uses.

The County's "Upper Rock Creek Master Plan" echoes many of the recommendations outlined in the City's neighborhood plan and recognizes that the property is "logically part of the Lincoln Park neighborhood". The County plan strongly supports residential development of the site over the long term. However the plan also recognizes that low intensity industrial uses not requiring water or sewer service, such as the current proposal, may be appropriate.

Given the neighborhood plan objective to eliminate industrial uses and zoning from this site, the City staff cannot support the proposed preliminary plan. We acknowledge that the proposed storage use may not negatively impact the adjacent residential properties as much as other uses allowed within the County's I-1 zone. However the project will further continue the industrial use of the site inconsistent with the neighborhood plan.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "R. James Wasilak". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath it.

R. James Wasilak, AICP
Chief of Planning

C: Susan Swift, Director of Community Planning & Development
Services
Susan Strauss, P.E., Chief Engineer
Bobby Ray, AICP, Principal Planner
John Hollida, P.E., Civil Engineer II
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